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SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA

Letter dated 11 June 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement dated 4 June 1993, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation relating to the adoption by Estonia of the discriminatory Act on elections to organs of local self-government.

I should be grateful if you would have the statement circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under item 116 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

* A/48/50.

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ANNEX

Statement dated 4 June 1993 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

On 3 June 1993 the President of the Republic of Estonia promulgated a discriminatory Act on elections to organs of local self-government, adopted on 19 May 1993 by the Parliament of Estonia. The Act deprives non-citizens in Estonia of the right to be elected to such organs. This is yet another glaring manifestation of the consequences of the arbitrary withholding of Estonian citizenship from the Russian-speaking population of the Republic in February 1992. It is a further reminder to ethnic Russians that they are aliens in Estonia, part of that one third of the country's population whose rights are determined by the prevailing balance of political forces in Parliament.

It is of a piece that those inhabitants of Estonia who had previously been denied the right to Estonian citizenship have now also been categorically deprived of the right to participate actively in the public life of the State in which they reside, by participating in local self-government, even in those areas where they constitute an overall majority of the population.

It is worth noting that the Act was adopted immediately after Estonia's admission to membership of the Council of Europe. Furthermore, its adoption was deferred until the question of Estonia's membership had been decided. It can now be seen how the Estonian side regards the commitments which it has entered into as a result of its accession to the Council of Europe.

Regrettably, the numerous appeals addressed to the Parliament and the President of the Republic of Estonia by the country's inhabitants, public organizations and organs of local self-government have been ignored. This new step serves to heighten national tension and inter-ethnic divisiveness in Estonia.

Once again, disregard has been shown for international commitments, such as those under the Treaty on the basis for inter-State relations with the Russian Federation of 12 January 1991 and those in the area of human rights. The process of normalizing Russian-Estonian relations has been rendered more difficult. Who stands to gain from all this?